

Good evening, my fellow citizens:

This is not a time for exultation -- it is a time for thanksgiving. A threat to the peace and security of this Hemisphere has abated -- and the prospects for world-wide war and devastation have been materially reduced.

One week ago tonight I reported to you on the presence of Soviet offensive weapons in Cuba capable of striking most of our cities as well as those of our neighbors. I pledged then that this nation's unswerving objective would be the removal of these weapons from this Hemisphere; and I outlined the initial steps that this nation would take in pursuit of that objective.

Tonight, as all of you know, there is every indication that this objective will be fulfilled. Chairman Khrushchev has agreed to remove these weapons from Cuba under the watchful eye of the United Nations . . . (up-to-date information on UN arrangements, today's surveillance, etc.).

This is not a "victory" for the United States -- this is a victory for peace. This is a victory for those in every land who yearn for the day when war will be no more -- when men can be free from the ancient fear of war now made more terrible by the force of modern arms -- when nations large and small, in a time of crisis, will be swayed not by habit or by hatred but by a universal desire to seek accommodation.

These last seven days of October have been fraught with great peril and tension. Their apparent result is to return the world to the status quo which existed a month or so ago. But they may have made a far greater contribution to the history of man if they have discouraged the use of aggression and encouraged on both sides the search for ending the means of aggression.

We cannot relax our vigilance. The actual withdrawal of these weapons from Cuba will not be completed for some time. The effect of these events on Cuba's attempts, under the Castro regime, to export subversion and aggression throughout Latin America is yet to be seen. This nation has repeated its previous assurance that: we would not invade Cuba so long as that island possessed no weapons which threatened our security and honored its international obligations to avoid aggression. But we have neither abandoned this Hemisphere's efforts to halt its subversion by Cuba or its hope that the Cuban people will someday be free.

There are, moreover, other problems which trouble the world -- fighting between India and Red China -- pressure on the people of Berlin -- and a host of other sources of potential crisis or danger. The build-up in our armed forces of the last year and a half will thus continue, until peace is secure.

Nevertheless there is much for which we are thankful. The nations of this Hemisphere ^{stood} ~~stand~~ shoulder to shoulder to combat this threat to us all. Our allies around the world voiced their united support though they, too, would have been engulfed had a general war broken out. Without these friends and allies, our case would not have been as strong and our cause might not have prevailed.

The United Nations -- so often abused as weak and idealistic -- proved once again that its voice can be strong and its efforts realistic. It provided in this crisis both a channel of accommodation and a means of verification -- and this nation can take pride in our support of that organization.

Finally, there is cause for both gratitude and pride in the response of you, the American people. Confronted with the gravest crisis since the end of the war -- and recognizing that the potential hazards were greater than any we had ever risked as a nation -- we stood united as a people, confident in both the justice and the strength of our cause. There was no panic in the face of peril. There was no impulse to abandon all principle and precedent in some premature or reckless course that would have undermined our alliances and our objectives. The nation was calm and determined -- and so we must remain.